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ABSTRACT

The Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network (PALPIN) project was conducted to establish statewide and regional inquiry groups to help adult literacy practitioners improve their performance by raising and investigating issues meaningful to their day-to-day practice. The conceptual framework underlying Philadelphia's Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Project practitioner network was modified to fit the needs/interests/capabilities of adult literacy practitioners/programs throughout Pennsylvania. The modified framework was used to establish inquiry groups in two of Pennsylvania's staff development regions, each serving diverse urban, suburban, and rural populations. In the first region, the entire inquiry group met monthly, with smaller groups convening more often. In the second region, the inquiry group met every other month and participants were assigned inquiry mentors from another staff development region. A 4-day winter inquiry institute that was open to practitioners from anywhere in Pennsylvania was planned and facilitated by three Philadelphia practitioners and the project director. All project recruitment goals were met or exceeded, the project completion rate was high, and feedback from participants was extremely positive. (Appendixes constituting nearly 70% of this document contain the following: sample application, flier, newsletter article, response sheet, and final response sheet; meeting agendas; winter inquiry institute newsletters; and inquiry questions/topics/titles.) (MN)

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ED 402 494

Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network (PALPIN)

Final Report
August 1996

99-6014

Submitted to
Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education
Pennsylvania Department of Education

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ABSTRACT PAGE

TITLE: Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network: Building Capacity, Strenthening Links
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Purpose: The PALPIN project was designed to improve the educational opportunities of adult learners in the state by improving the practice of teachers, tutors and program administrators. Our goal was to accomplish this by establishing a cross-state inquiry group during the PALPIN Winter Inquiry Institute and inquiry groups in two staff development regions which would encourage practitioners to raise and investigate questions and issues meaningful to their day-to-day practice.

Procedures: Practitioner inquiry groups have followed a variety of formats and procedures over the years. In keeping with the overall goal of practitioner inquiry groups as initially developed through the Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Projects (see Lytle, Belzer and Reumann 1992, 1993), PALPIN sought to develop formats and procedures which met the needs of practitioners in their local contexts. Thus, number and location of meetings, level of intensity involved in participation and meeting formats varied in the two regional groups and the Winter Institute. However, all three formats had several features in common: they supported the development of a professional community; the work of the group and individuals grew out of the day-to-day realities, needs and interests of participants; they empowered practitioners to take control of their own learning and encouraged them to take responsibility for making change; and they generated new knowledge for the field (Lytle, Belzer, Cantafio and Reumann, forthcoming). Extensive reading from the research literature and writing and discussion about the relationships between this work and day-to-day practice, and the implemention of inquiry projects using descriptive research methods helped practitioners articulate their own questions and develop strategies for exploring them.

Summary of Findings: In the shift from providing practitioner inquiry groups in a densely populated urban area for ALPIP, to working towards a state-wide, large scale delivery of professional development in PALPIN findings included 1) PALPIN has the flexibility to meet the needs of practitioners in diverse contexts, 2) the long distance many practitioners had to travel to participate and the limited time available for them provided challenges but they were not insurmountable, 3) the process of practitioner inquiry needs a great deal of support, 4) the staff development opportunity in PALPIN is not to be found just in the completion of an inquiry project; rather all aspects of the process seem to play an important role 5) potential leadership has emerged and 6) the experience this year in PALPIN is consistent with the research findings which documented the work of ALPIP during its early years.

Comments: Measurable outcomes in staff development of this type are extremely difficult to document. Because the goal is not so much to train practitioners to adopt specific behaviors, there may not be much visible change. Oftentimes, however, participants report changes in attitudes, ways of thinking about their work and shifts in relationships with students and colleagues. The data sources we have also show that PALPIN made a significant difference in their professional lives. For example, participants report that it helped them become more reflective and problem solving about their work, it encouraged them to alter specific practices, perceptions and interactions and it strengthened their professional and intellectual community.

The process of building a state-wide network of practitioners who use inquiry to improve their individual practice, their programs and the wider field got off to a successful start. Success, in this case, can be judged using a number of different criteria. Recruitment goals were met or exceeded, project completion rate was high, and feedback from participants was extremely positive. They clearly appreciated PALPIN and felt that it had made a difference in their work lives.

Products: Practitioner inquiry projects, newsletter articles, Winter Inquiry Institute Newsletters, final report.

Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network (PALPIN)

Final Report Abstract

99-6014

During its first year of operation the Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network (PALPIN) had several general goals. These included 1) adapting and refining a conceptual framework which had undergirded the Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Project (ALPIP)--a local (Philadelphia), cross-program, urban practitioner inquiry community--to fit the needs, interests and capacities of practitioners and programs representing a diverse set of literacy services around the state, 2) building the capacity of individual practitioners and programs to implement practitioner inquiry as a staff development strategy, 3) cultivating practitioner inquiry leadership around the state such that the spread of the program would not ultimately be entirely dependent on Philadelphia-based expertise in the future, 4) support and strengthen a state-wide network of practitioners engaged in inquiry activities and 5) work toward a model for state-wide delivery of practitioner inquiry as a professional development opportunity.

Practitioner inquiry groups in Philadelphia (initiated in 1991) have followed different formats and procedures over the years, but all have had a set of common characteristics. They have supported the development of professional community; the work of the group and individuals grows out of the day-to-day realities, needs and interests of participants; they empower practitioners to take control of their own learning and encourage them to take responsibility for making change; and they generate new knowledge for the field (Lytle, Belzer, Cantafio and Reumann, forthcoming). The challenge in implementing PALPIN this year was to initiate inquiry communities in new contexts using formats that were uniquely suited to those places and practitioners, yet maintain the critical features that define inquiry as staff development. The overall objectives included establishing inquiry groups in two staff development regions (outside Philadelphia) and the implementation of a four-day winter inquiry institute open to practitioners from anywhere in the state. Each of these three major aspects of the project was executed.

Through the implementation of the process a number of things were learned about large scale delivery of practitioner inquiry as staff development. These include the fact that, 1) PALPIN has the flexibility to meet the needs of practitioners in diverse contexts, 2) the long distance many practitioners had to travel to participate and the limited time available for them provided challenges but they were not insurmountable, 3) the process of practitioner inquiry needs a great deal of support, 4) the staff development opportunity in PALPIN is not just to be found in the completion of an inquiry project, 5) potential leadership has emerged and 6) the experience this year in PALPIN is consistent with the research findings which documented the work of ALPIP during it early years.

Measurable outcomes in staff development of this type are extremely difficult to document. Because the goal is not so much to train practitioners to take up specific behaviors, there may not be much visible change. Oftentimes participants report changes in attitudes, ways of thinking about their work and shifts in relationships with students and colleagues. The data sources we have, however, do show practitioners reporting that PALPIN made a significant difference in their professional lives. For example, participants report that it helped them become more reflective and problem solving about their work, it encouraged them to alter specific practices, perceptions and interactions and it strengthened their professional and intellectual community.

The process of building a state-wide network of practitioners who use inquiry to improve their individual practice, their programs and the wider field got off to a successful start. Success, in this case, can be judged using a number of different criteria. Recruitment goals were met or exceeded, project completion rate was high, and feedback from participants was extremely positive. They clearly appreciated PALPIN and felt that it had made a difference in their work lives.

Introduction

During its first year of operation the Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network (PALPIN) had several general goals. These included 1) adapting and refining a conceptual framework which had undergirded the Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Project (ALPIP)--a local (Philadelphia), cross-program, urban practitioner inquiry community--to fit the needs, interests and capacities of practitioners and programs representing a diverse set of literacy services around the state, 2) building the capacity of individual practitioners and programs to implement practitioner inquiry as a staff development strategy, 3) cultivating practitioner inquiry leadership around the state such that the spread of the program would not ultimately be entirely dependent on Philadelphia-based expertise in the future, 4) support and strengthen a state-wide network of practitioners engaged in inquiry activities and 5) work toward a model for state-wide delivery of practitioner inquiry as a professional development opportunity.

PALPIN grew out of a number of inquiry-centered staff development projects for literacy educators in Philadelphia. Inquiry-centered staff development is defined as:

> staff development in which participants focus on (1) conducting 'systematic, intentional inquiry into teaching, learning and administration by practitioners in their own program settings' (adapted from Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1991); (2) organizing inquiry as a social and collaborative process; (3) critically analyzing current theory and research from a field-based perspective; and (4) making problematic the social, political, and cultural arrangement that structure literacy learning and teaching in particular contexts. Inquiry-centered staff development starts from two key assumptions: that research by practitioners can contribute to both individual professional development and immediate program effectiveness and that these inquiries have the potential to enhance and alter, not just add to, the wider knowledge base of the field (Lytle, Belzer and Reumann, 1992).

A wide range of strategies and activities to support inquiry-based staff development are possible, but all involve interacting with colleagues and the research literature, processes for articulating inquiry questions, close observation and documentation of practice, making problematic the social, cultural, cognitive and political arrangements that structure literacy learning and teaching in particular contexts and continuous reassessment of one's own

knowledge. When practitioners conduct inquiries, they raise questions about what they think they know, see and do in their classrooms and programs. Therefore practitioner inquiry is not simply a staff development technique, but encourages people to take a stance on knowledge and professional practice in which they are continually learning and generating new understandings about literacy and learning for themselves, other practitioners in their programs and the wider field. In other words, while practitioner inquiry supports the use of particular strategies (e.g. implementation of inquiry projects), the overall goal is to provide a process that encourages practitioners to view their work in new, deeper and/or more highly nuanced and complex ways. Regardless of whether practitioners continue to complete formal inquiry projects in subsequent years, the goal is that they will have a set of strategies and ways of looking at their work that will can be integrated into their in the future.

Practitioner inquiry groups in Philadelphia (initiated in 1991) have followed different formats and procedures over the years, but all have had the common characteristics listed above. That is, they have supported the development of professional community; the work of the group and individuals grows out of the day-to-day realities, needs and interests of participants; they empower practitioners to take control of their own learning and encourage them to take responsibility for making change; and they generate new knowledge for the field (Lytle, Belzer, Cantafio and Reumann, forthcoming). The challenge in implementing PALPIN this year was to initiate inquiry communities in new contexts using formats that were uniquely suited to those places and practitioners, yet maintain the critical features that define inquiry as staff development. The overall objectives included establishing inquiry groups in two staff development regions (outside Philadelphia) and the implementation of a four-day winter inquiry institute open to practitioners from anywhere in the state. Each of these three major aspects of the project was executed. The following report details project design and activities, what can be

learned from the process for the future from this first year of the project, and the impact of PALPIN from the standpoint of participants.

Project Design and Activities

1. Regional Inquiry Groups

a. Initial planning

Through the assistance of ABLE Bureau staff, Regions 6 and 8 were selected as the sites for the regional inquiry groups. These two regions were chosen based on the Bureau's perception of their readiness and willingness to participate in this initiative. Regional coordinators were then asked to recruit three to four key practitioners (e.g. members of their steering committees) to participate in a planning committee which would work with the Project Director to decide on appropriate inquiry formats and recruitment strategies for their regions. Planning meetings, which took place in early fall, served an important two-way purpose. For the Project Director, they helped begin to familiarize her with the region--the geography, predominant program types, and primary interests and concerns of practitioners in the area. The committee members worked effectively to shape formats and recruitment materials to address the specific realities within each region. For the planning committee members, the process helped familiarize them with inquiry as a staff development strategy. Several members elected to participate in the actual inquiry group and others, apparently sold on the potential value of the opportunity, worked at recruiting colleagues to participate.

b. Recruitment and application process

Both regions chose to use newsletter articles, a flier and word of mouth to recruit inquiry group participants. Planning committee members assisted in editing and revising printed materials written by the Project Director and also agreed to contact colleagues around the region in an effort to interest them in participating in PALPIN. In addition, the Project Director recruited participants at the fall workshops in both regions through a

formal presentation in one region and through informal conversations in another. The flier and application were distributed at these events.

In both regions a similar application process was used. Practitioners were required to complete an application which included several questions regarding current and past work experience in the field as well as two short essay questions. In addition, applicants were required to submit a recommendation and commitment form from their immediate supervisors.

In Region 6, recruitment efforts were successful. Seventeen applications were received and one additional practitioner applied by coming to the first meeting of the group. Eight different organizations were represented in the group. In Region 8, the initial attempt to recruit was not as successful. Initially, only three applications were received. The planning committee reconvened to discuss apparent obstacles and strategies for additional recruitment. An altered inquiry group format was agreed to and each planning group member also agreed to make personal phone calls to recruit specific practitioners. Following these efforts, a total of thirteen applications were received. Eight different organizations were represented in this group. In addition, five practitioners from Region 9 were recruited as mentors.

Planning committee members also discussed criteria for acceptance and reviewed applications. In both regions, all applicants were accepted. All applicants seemed to be strongly committed to the field and showed an openness and willingness to try inquiry as a strategy for professional development, many were already leaders in their agencies, regions or at the state level. They all seem like excellent candidates who should have the opportunity to participate in PALPIN.

c. Regional Inquiry Group formats

Although the Project Director had assumed that both regions would follow a similar meeting format, the planning and recruitment process made clear that local contexts would shape the groups into rather different formats, not only from what had been used in

Philadelphia--an urban setting serving practitioners in a relatively concentrated geographical area--but also from one region to another, even though both are geographically spread out and serve diverse urban, suburban and rural populations. While the initial ALPIP model had included a year-long series of bi-weekly meetings, for example, it was clear that regional groups would not be able to meet as often. In Region 6, it was agreed that meetings of the whole group would take place monthly, but that small groups (which, by the consensus of the group, were composed based on geographical proximity) would convene at least once in between meetings to continue the work of the group. In Region 8, planning committee members felt that one of the obstacles to recruitment was requiring attendance at monthly meetings. Therefore, meetings were planned for approximately every other month and participants were assigned to inquiry mentors from Region 9 to support the ongoing inquiry work during the long breaks between meetings. Both groups began work in early December and concluded in mid-June.

Both Regional groups utilized similar inquiry strategies developed in ALPIP. Packets of readings consisting of current research (written by university researchers and practitioners) were compiled to reflect the interests of practitioners in each group. During initial whole group meetings, participants were introduced to the concepts of practitioner inquiry. At subsequent meetings extensive time was devoted to discussing questions and concerns about their practice in relationship to the readings. In addition to relatively free-form discussions and sharing, participants read, wrote and talked about their work using structured "oral inquiry" strategies often utilized in teacher research groups (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1991). Such preliminary work serves several purposes: to begin to build a shared intellectual community; to encourage an atmosphere in which multiple perspectives, tentative and partial understandings and unanswerable questions about practice are valued, and even cultivated; and to create an environment in which participants begin to develop individual inquiry questions to be pursued in the second half of the year.

The facilitators, small group members (in Region 6) and mentors (in Region 8) all played instrumental roles in supporting the development of individual inquiry questions. This process often involves encouraging practitioners to follow their own particular interests, choosing a question of appropriate scale given time available and other constraints, and pursuing an interest that is likely to help the individual learn something new about his or her practice. Articulating a question is often somewhat evolutionary. Many participants either changed their focus entirely from an initial idea or shifted emphasis or direction within a general topic. Small groups (in Region 6) and mentoring pairs (in Region 8) had specific tasks to complete between large group meetings that supported participants in the process of developing an inquiry stance on their practice and the design, implementation and completion of inquiry projects.

PALPIN meetings also assisted participants in choosing appropriate strategies for documenting data collection that would help them look more deeply into their inquiry questions. Much of the latter part of the year was devoted to the use of descriptive techniques for looking collaboratively at data collected as part of the inquiry project. Many participants found this process to be one of the outstanding aspects of PALPIN as it enabled them to see far more in their own data (or in the data of other participants) than they could possibly have seen on their own, it helped everyone raise helpful and meaningful questions about their work, and it created an atmosphere of sharing and mutual help and support. Finally PALPIN meetings supported practitioners as they carried their inquiry projects to completion in the form of a final report.

2. Winter Inquiry Institute

a. Initial planning

The Winter Inquiry Institute was planned and facilitated by three Philadelphia practitioners and the Project Director who had all participated in and taken leadership in past ALPIP activities. Drawing on their experience of year-long inquiry groups and using the model of the Philadelphia Writing Project's week-long summer institutes, planners sought

to provide many of the same experiences they had come to value in inquiry groups in a very short, intensive time period. The primary challenges for this group was to develop a plan that would build community, provide opportunities to read, write and talk about practice and give participants a basic understanding of and strategies for executing practitioner inquiry once they went back to their work sites.

b. Recruitment and application process

Recruitment on a state-wide basis was particularly challenging for a new, relatively unknown program like PALPIN. Initially RSDC Coordinators were asked via e-mail for suggestions about the best ways to reach practitioners in their regions. Some responded by suggesting ways that fliers could be distributed to reach a large number of practitioners. The Project Director met with Coordinators at a quarterly meeting in Harrisburg. Here, she was able to answer questions and address concerns of coordinators and again appeal for their help in recruitment. The ABLE Bureau also assisted in recruitment by doing a large mailing encouraging participation. In addition, an article in What's the Buzz alerted practitioners around the state to this staff development opportunity.

Interested practitioners were required to submit an application similar to the one used for the regional groups. Recruitment efforts paid off handsomely as twenty-one applications were received and sixteen practitioners were accepted to participate. They represented twelve different agencies and seven of the nine regions (every region but 5 and 6--a site of a regional inquiry group was represented). In addition to PDE support, the Winter Institute benefitted from a UPS Foundation grant which is in part supporting the local Philadelphia practitioner inquiry network. In addition to local planning and facilitation, Philadelphia practitioners were involved in the Institute in other ways. Several did presentations during the institute and six of the Institute participants were in part supported through UPS money and came from the Philadelphia area (Regions 8 and 9). In addition, local "ALPIPers" hosted a pot-luck dinner for Institute participants during their stay in Philadelphia.

c. Winter Inquiry Institute formats

For each of the first three days of the four-day institute, the day was divided into three parts. In the morning, participants explored particular topics in the field--learner-centered education, reading and writing, and assessment using a variety of collaborative oral inquiry strategies. Following lunch, participants met in small journal groups to write and discuss their responses to a focussing question which followed up on the morning activities. The afternoon agenda focussed on particular aspects and strategies for executing practitioner inquiry projects. One the first day, interviewing as form of data collection was discussed. In addition, two local practitioners shared their experiences doing inquiry projects. On the second day, a local practitioner shared data collected from a current inquiry project and then participants presented data they had brought with them to the Institute from their work. On the third day, more participants shared data and the use of observation and field notes was discussed as a data collection strategy. During the second and third day, facilitators met individually with participants to assist them in preliminary plans for inquiry projects to be completed at home. The fourth day (a half day) was devoted primarily to making final plans for implementing inquiry projects "back home."

d. Follow-up

During the Institute, participants brainstormed strategies for ongoing support and sustaining the community over time and distance. Among the several ideas that were adopted, it was agreed that at least two newsletters would be produced and that data would continue to be shared and collaboratively analyzed through the mail. To this end, two participants solicited feedback from the group in the first newsletter and participant responses were shared in the second. In addition, the Project Director felt it was important to have some ongoing data on how participants were progressing in their projects, so she sent out three surveys (February through May) asking participants to describe where they were in the inquiry process, how it was going and with whom of the institute participants they were maintaining contact. Results of the surveys were also reported in the newsletter.

If respondents requested help or, based on the survey responses, seemed stuck, the Project Director contacted them by telephone or e-mail to provide assistance.

3. Other activities

a. On-line telecommunications

Although on-line telecommunications were envisioned as an important potential tool to support and sustain inquiry work and inquiry communities, this did not happen to any great extent during this year. In response to a question on the PALPIN application, it became clear that very few participants were on-line and that it would be very difficult to make a significant change in this area. A decision was made to focus on building inquiry communities in other ways this year. However, on-line communications between the Project Director and RSDC coordinators, the ABLE Bureau and Allan Quigley (Project Director of PA-ARN, the other major staff development initiative in the state) were used extensively to support PALPIN planning. Some participants did have e-mail and used it communicate with the Project Director.

b. Collaborative planning of cross-state events with PA-ARN

Two conference presentation proposals were submitted jointly and a pre-conference session was planned for COABE. One session was designed to share program strategies and formats as well as findings from practitioner projects. A second session proposed to discuss state-wide delivery systems for staff development that utilize "learning from practice" strategies as both PALPIN and PA-ARN do. The pre-conference session was designed as a working/sharing/problem solving day for practitioners involved in this work in Pennsylvania and around the country.

Unfortunately, only the state-wide delivery systems session was scheduled for presentation. The pre-conference session was implemented and was very fully attended. Contrary to what had been anticipated, participants included both practitioners and program planners who are already actively involved in "learning from practice" types of staff development, and also many curious but inexperienced practitioners from around the

country. The day was spent exploring differences and similarities among programs and opening up key questions and concerns about this work for discussion.

As part of its plan for the year, PA-ARN produced four newsletters that were distributed around the state. PALPIN contributed to two issues. One included an interview with a regional inquiry group participant. The other detailed the topics investigated through inquiry projects by participants in the two regional groups and the Winter Inquiry Institute.

What can be learned from these processes

1. PALPIN has the flexibility to meet the needs of practitioners in diverse contexts

Through its work in the two regions and the Winter Inquiry Institute it was clear that PALPIN can take on many different formats, provide several levels of intensity, meet in a variety of settings (at different programs around the region in Region 6, at one central location in Region 8, and in Philadelphia for the Institute), utilize various forms of facilitation/leadership/support, and still accomplish very similar goals of establishing inquiry communities that support collaborative and individual inquiry. Each context provided its own set of opportunities and challenges, yet creative problem solving and flexibility meant that the integration of the conceptual framework in a variety of settings could be maintained. It is assumed, based on this year's experience, that there are many other possible variations that can be developed to meet the needs of practitioners and programs around the state.

It is important to clarify, based on the experience this year, that PALPIN is not a model or a curriculum package. Rather it is a process which includes several critical features that can be woven around a wide variety of contexts. Thus, it will never be possible to simply "put" PALPIN somewhere in the state. Rather, local practitioners and PALPIN leaders will probably always need to work together to make PALPIN work for a particular setting.

2. The long distance many practitioners had to travel to participate and the limited time available to them provided challenges but they were not insurmountable. However, accommodating these challenges meant holding fewer meetings.

Many people around the state expressed concerns about the viability of practitioner inquiry outside an urban area and away from the support of a university. They pointed out, rightly, that PALPIN would have to contend with sparsely populated areas and a largely part-time work force. However, PALPIN was able to surmount these challenges to a large extent. By scaling back the number of meetings, by finding ways to continue the inquiry work between meetings and by drawing on local leaders for help, PALPIN managed to work around the time and distance problems. This is not to say that the project was made automatically accessible to anyone in a region. There were still many who felt it was impossible to participate. However, this year seemed to prove that we can continue to look for and find solutions to the logistical difficulties of making staff development on-going and community building.

From the program planner stand point, the fact that all PALPIN groups worked with far fewer meetings than had been used previously in ALPIP showed that much can be accomplished in less time. However, it was clear from participant feedback that certain choices regarding meeting agendas made to accommodate to fewer meetings became sacrifices that not everyone was happy with. For example, with fewer meetings it was more important to stick closely to meeting agendas rather than more loosely follow the direction of the group. Some participants felt hemmed in by the tight structure. Others complained that they had not had enough time to get to know everyone in the group. While everyone in ALPIP groups presented data from their projects, in PALPIN only some could. It was difficult to find time to discuss readings in as much depth as we would have liked as well. Participants involved in planning for the second year of PALPIN, made clear their desire for more time together by suggesting that a big effort be made to get the groups started earlier in the year.

3. The process of practitioner inquiry needs a great deal of support

This year's efforts to create professional development opportunities using practitioner inquiry affirmed the fact that for participants to get the most out of it, they need a significant amount of support--from colleagues in the group and facilitators and mentors. Many participants emphasized the importance of the ongoing conversations that inquiry group meetings and tasks began that were sustained in their small groups or with co-workers and/or mentors. Others noted with regret their lack of opportunity to do so. Mentors and facilitators not only provided support during meetings but also met one one one with participants, read and responded to journal entries, and were used in phone consultation on a regular basis.

This kind of sustained support is probably an important element in helping participants make the transition from passive receiver of knowledge often engendered in traditional staff development to active problem poser and problem solver encouraged in practitioner inquiry. It is not an easy transition for some, and even those who take to it naturally need help. Likewise, we know from experience that moving from a participant role to a leadership role is not an automatic transition. Practitioners who have been through the process of participating in an inquiry group have a familiarity with the strategies and activities and have the experience of having conducted an inquiry project. However, to be able to facilitate the development of an inquiry stance in others is challenging and most will need help to move from participant to leader--a significant challenge for the second year of the project.

4. The staff development opportunity in PALPIN is not just to be found in the completion of an inquiry project. Rather, it is the many small and large group and individual activities which occur along the way which help practitioners develop an inquiry stance on their practice.

Although the completion of an inquiry project is the tangible culmination of the year's work in an inquiry group, it is not the only product of the work. Throughout the year, activities are designed not only to move participants towards designing and

implementing projects, but perhaps more importantly developing a habit of raising meaningful questions about their work, questioning their own assumptions as well as those of university researchers, and developing strategies for looking more deeply at their own interests and concerns. Inquiry projects themselves are both a product of and part of the process of practitioner inquiry. In practitioner inquiry the emphasis is less on training practitioners to become researchers as it is on helping them develop habits of mind that will help them become life long students of their own practice.

5. Potential leadership has emerged

In an end-of-year survey, participants were asked whether they would like to be involved in PALPIN during its second year. Eighty percent of respondents said they would like to be involved in PALPIN in someway next year, and fifty percent said they would like to be involved in a leadership role. These roles were identified as planner/facilitator of the Winter Inquiry Institute, as leader/facilitator/mentor of a regional inquiry group, as a reader/writer/editor of a practitioner inquiry guide or framework or as a planner/facilitator of PAACE Mid-Winter Conference inquiry activities. This range of options for participation beyond membership in an inquiry group provides many different ways for first year participants to gradually take on leadership both in their own areas and on the state level during the second year of the project.

6. The experience this year in PALPIN is consistent with the research findings which documented the work of ALPIP during its first two years (See Lytle, Belzer and Reumann, 1993 and Lytle, Belzer, Cantafio, Reumann and Barry, 1994).

During the first several years of ALPIP, facilitators were charged with not only designing and implementing a practitioner inquiry group, but also with documenting the process as an investigation of a promising new form of staff development. A 1993 technical report focused on understanding more about why practitioners choose the topics they do to investigate and how they go about doing so. This report suggested that practitioner inquiry projects grow out of practitioners desire to understand their own work

in light of profound "tensions and disjunctions in the wider field of adult literacy education" (p. 17). Specifically questions reflect "dissonances created by complex interactions among...the practitioner's professional philosophy and role, the program and Seminar context the policy climate in the wider field, and the demands of daily practice" (p. 19). This report also found that practitioners select research methods "that are congruent with, and that often intensify or extend, their day-to-day activities" (p. 34) as practitioners.

A 1993 report began to trace the ways in which participation in a practitioner inquiry group interacts with and alters practitioners work lives and reshapes their understanding of the circumstances under which professional development and learning take place. It showed that participants begin to consciously see their own work places and work as sites for learning and likewise see themselves as conscious learners in those places. In addition, they came to see practitioner inquiry as a rich and valuable source of new knowledge that was useful not just to themselves but to the wider field. This new knowledge, while sometimes in the realm of "what works" more often focussed on understanding more deeply what's going already or what happens when something new is tried. This stance toward knowledge "represents a significant shift in their stance on the relationships of practice and knowledge" (p. 63) A frequent byproduct of inquiry was inviting learners (in the case of teachers and tutors) or colleagues (in the case of administrators) into the process of learning, thus repositioning various stakeholders to have more of a voice and to encourage more participatory modes of working. Along the way, this often meant that participants made their own assumptions and frameworks for their work explicit to themselves and others, thus opening up their thinking to analysis and critique. As participants undertook new roles and functions in pursuing their inquiry questions, they became more committed to exploring their practice individually and in a group thus decreasing isolation and building professional networks.

Although these findings grow out of research which documented a particular form of practitioner inquiry used in Philadelphia, they are entirely consistent with the work done individually and collaboratively by each of the PALPIN inquiry groups this year.

What happened for participants in PALPIN

Measurable outcomes in staff development of this type are extremely difficult to document. Because the goal is not so much to train practitioners to take up specific behaviors, there may not be much visible change. Oftentimes participants report changes in attitudes, ways of thinking about their work and shifts in relationships with students and colleagues. In PALPIN, we had three primary sources of evidence to document these and other changes--response sheets completed at the end of every meeting, self report in a program final evaluation form completed by participants at the last meetings of the regional groups and inquiry project reports. Taken together, these three data sources do show practitioners reporting that PALPIN made a significant difference in their professional lives.

1. Becoming more reflective and problem solving about work

Many participants reported that participating in PALPIN had helped them become more reflective practitioners who are able and willing to step back from the day to day grind and become more analytical about the challenges they face as well as potential directions they could take to deal with them.

> The most important thing about participant in PALPIN this year was the opportunity it provided me to step outside of the day-to-day routines. I was able to look at things from a different perspective and see things that have always been there, but that I'd never taken the time to notice before.
>
> This project gave me a structure to look critically and carefully at my practice....I now think of myself as a natural researcher.
>
> It is a privilege to be able to reflect on the regular challenges of one's work, to step outside the routine activities.

In each of these quotes, the participants seem to be saying that PALPIN created an invitation for them to look more closely at their work and also carved out a space in their

work lives to do so. However, equally important it could also be said that these practitioners now have the skills and encouragement to continue looking at their work more "critically and carefully" whether they continue to participate in a formal inquiry group or not.

2 Changing practices, perceptions and interactions

In response to a question which asked participants to write specifically about ways that participation in PALPIN had influenced or changed their practice, respondents noted a wide variety of ways in which they could see themselves doing their jobs differently. Some wrote more about how becoming more reflective had changed their perceptions about their work.

> I feel I can take time--or give myself permission to take time to reflect on class dynamics and students instead of always task oriented and go, go, go with the work.
>
> Without it I would still be dissatisfied with the way things were going, without knowing why...It gave me time to think and reflect on my program and ask questions.
>
> I am now looking for more ways to deal with and work with my students and ways to improve their skills. Working on my paper made me stand back and reflect on the methods I use to teach and try to improve them.
>
> I have been trying to allow more time for reflection in my day to day practice. It is so easy to get caught up in "doing" rather than allowing time and space for thinking reflectively.

Others wrote about the ways in which PALPIN had helped them deal with the challenges of the work in new ways--by posing different kinds of questions about it, by interacting differently with students and colleagues, and by bringing new strategies to the problem solving process.

> I feel better about myself as a supervisor--PALPIN has overflowed in my personal life. I trust myself and my decisions more.
>
> I've always been interested in improving the quality of my own work; practitioner inquiry has [given me] a process which helps clarify the way to think about it.
>
> PALPIN has certainly influenced the way I look at a lot of things, including my work, especially: 1) human interactions and 2) approaching problems.

> It has been refreshing to research new ideas and methods. I have a greater awareness and desire to ask myself, "what would happen if I..." and then to try it for results.
>
> PALPIN has given me the chance to explore a topic that interests me and that affects my practice. It allowed me to move from, "In my class, this happens" to "I wonder why" to "ah-hah!"

Also some participants wrote that PALPIN had encouraged them to try new things and/or had given them new ideas and techniques that were not only useful in their own growth and development but could be useful at their program sites. For example, some planned to adopt particular strategies and techniques they learned about in PALPIN into their own practice. Others shared the fact that doing their inquiry projects encouraged them to take on new activities or try new tools.

> Some of the techniques and ideas about looking at your own work will be helpful for staff development and future training of tutors.
>
> PALPIN has definitely changed my practice. We will be doing a different type of student assessment in the future [as a result of my project]. I also will be taking more time to listen to staff members and to students in the future.

Another respondent said that she has used data sharing exercises as well as other activities learned in PALPIN for training tutors. It also encouraged her to seek out more published research and has helped "me focus on my own practice in a different way."

3. Strengthening a professional community/ building an intellectual community

Another important aspect of participation in PALPIN for many participants was the opportunity to step into a professional community in which talk about practice (both challenges and successes) is respected and engaged seriously. Whether a participant teaches in relative isolation or in the midst of a large program, the community developed in an inquiry group seemed to offer a unique context for talking about practice.

> I also used PALPIN as an opportunity to get ideas and feedback from other people that I might have never solicited before. Another good outcome of having participated in PALPIN is the network of people I've met in the field of adult ed.
>
> [One of the most important things about participating in PALPIN was] getting out of my little world, meeting new people, learning about other programs, traveling to program sites.

Participants came to see their colleagues in the group as important sources of learning. The interactions they had with each other in group meetings went well beyond traditional sharing. Rather than simply exchange teaching strategies and materials (although this happened), participants looked closely together at data gathered from each other's practice and were able to help individuals see their own work from new and multiple perspectives. Those who helped do the looking also learned from looking closely at data from practice of others. Therefore looking collaboratively at data from individuals' practice created a two-way learning opportunity. For example, one participant noted that the reflections and observations that group members had made regarding data she had collected for her inquiry projects played a key part in her understanding of her work.

> In writing up this report, I was forced to revisit each PALPIN meeting. I used people's descriptions of my data in interpreting and formulating theories. The data became alive not only with the voices of the [research] participants themselves but also with the voices of my PALPIN colleagues. I found this process challenging and exciting.

Likewise, those providing feedback on shared data clearly benefitted from the process as well.

> I really enjoyed the data-sharing--especially the second interview--very interesting and deep and thought -provoking. Thanks for sharing it. The interview really gives me a lot to think about in my own practice.
>
> [What stands out from today's session is] how the process of [sharing data] informs/provides new lenses/underscores current beliefs for even the most seasoned of us.
>
> The data sharing stood out most clearly because as we make/formulate recommendations, I get so many new ideas for my own class/program.

Clearly, sharing formats that use structures for looking descriptively and in great detail at data gathered in classrooms and programs, a format frequently used in PALPIN groups, creates different kinds of opportunities for learning and growth than a simple exchange of materials and teaching tips typical of most sharing formats.

Finally, participants noticed that as the community began to build, their many differences--work contexts, student populations served, funding sources, philosophy and

assumptions about key concepts in the field--were not obstacles to their finding common threads in their work.

> I felt there was such a strong sense of comradeship among the group and shared purpose.
>
> [What stands out about today's session is] the diversity of concerns, programs, etc and yet how much we all have in common.
>
> [What stands out about today's session is] the diversity of programs and set up of the program the other participants take part in. The similarity of concerns the programs have.
>
> [What stands out about today's session is] different interpretations we all have of such "ordinary' words. Shared frustrations amongst different program providers.
>
> I feel that I am not alone in a lot of my thoughts and frustrations on adult literacy.

Conclusion

The process of building a state-wide network of practitioners who use inquiry to improve their individual practice, their programs and the wider field got off to a successful start. Success, in this case, can be judged using a number of different criteria.

1. Recruitment goals were met or exceeded in every case

The original objective of recruiting 10-15 participants for regional inquiry groups was met in both regions. Through the formation of a planning committee, the development of recruitment materials,word of mouth and evident interest, more than enough practitioners applied to participate to build inquiry groups composed of practitioners who were interested in and committed to their work. Likewise, with the help of RSDC coordinators, recruitment material and an ABLE Bureau mailing, more applications for the Winter Inquiry Institute were received than there were slots available.

2. Project completion rate was high

There was very little attrition in the regional groups. In Region 6, two people dropped out. One participant felt uncomfortable with the group dynamics and the other felt she had too much work to do. In Region 8, two people dropped out--both due to job loss. Of the participants who completed the year, ninety-two percent completed their inquiry projects as

well (two participants did not complete their projects in the two regions). Winter Inquiry Institute participants also had a high rate of completion in spite of the fact that they worked much more independently and with less ongoing support. Eighty-seven percent of them submitted final reports (two participants did not complete projects). This high completion rate is a testimony to the success of the institute in "selling" practitioner inquiry in a short amount of time, getting people ready to do an inquiry project and the high level of enthusiasm with which participants left the Institute in spite of increased obstacles for to completion of the work.

3. Feedback from participants was extremely positive. They clearly appreciated PALPIN and felt that it had made a difference in their work lives.

The observations and comments of participants in the section above provide ample evidence that participants found participation in PALPIN to have been worthwhile. One participant wrote, "This is definitely the most influential and meaningful staff development I have done." These sentiments were echoed by others in the group. Many people articulated ways in which PALPIN was different than other staff development experiences they had encountered. Not only the duration and intensity, but the ways in which it encouraged them to take up a new approach to their own learning and thinking were highlighted.

PALPIN has begun the process of building the capacity of practitioners around the state to use inquiry in their day to day work lives, and as they take up leadership roles within the network and in their professional lives in general. Rich seeds have been planted in fertile ground around the state which can be sowed during the second year of PALPIN and hopefully for many years to come. Although it is not always easy to measure quantitatively how this professional growth and development impacts on the educational opportunities for adult learners, it is easy to imagine that teachers and administrators who are newly energized, trying new approaches to their work, and more inclined to reflect on and look deeply at challenges in their practice will function more effectively in their jobs. Meanwhile, the formation of a professional community built around meaningful concerns

and real-life questions and challenges of practice has the potential to create strong links in a network around the state which in turn can support stronger local connections among practitioners. PALPIN has made important strides in building and supporting the capacity of practitioners around the state in using inquiry as they build new knowledge about teaching and administering, learning, and language and literacy which has relevance not only in their own work but for the wider adult basic and literacy education field.

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Appendices

I Sample application
II Sample flier
III Sample newsletter article
IV Meeting Agendas - Region 6
V Meeting Agendas - Region 8
VI Meeting Agendas - Winter Inquiry Institute
VII Sample Response Sheet
VIII Final Response Sheet
IX Winter Inquiry Institute Newsletters
X Inquiry questions, topics, or titles

PENNSYLVANIA ADULT LITERACY PRACTITIONER INQUIRY
NETWORK SEMINAR
REGION 8

APPLICATION

Deadline: November 10, 1995

Directions and Checklist

1. Fill in the application form below.

2. Respond to the two essay questions on page 3.

3. If you are a teacher, volunteer or program staff member, please have your director complete the attached form indicating support for your participation in the Region 8 PALPIN Seminar and willingness to provide opportunities within the program to share your work. If you would like submit an additional recommendation, please feel free to do so.

4. Return all materials to:

Elizabeth Mitchell
Region 8 Staff Development Coordinator
Cabrini College
610 King of Prussia Road
Radnor, PA 19087-3698

Please print or type

Name: _____

Home Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Program: _____

Program Address: _____

Are you a _____paid staff member or _____volunteer?

Are you on-line? _____ yes _____ no e-mail address: _____

Please describe your past and current position(s) in your program (include information regarding number, type and location of classes you teach or your responsibilities as a tutor, administrator, or staff member):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How long have your worked at this program? _____

Describe other experiences you have had in the field of adult education:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please describe both the informal and formal educational experiences that you feel have helped you with your work?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

The PALPIN Seminar will be designed in response to practitioner needs and interests. Please help us in the planning process by answering the following questions. Your answers will also help us select a diverse group of participants interested in working together to explore issues in ABE, GED and ESL. If possible, please type your answers and attach them to the completed application.

1. Describe a challenge or concern you faced in your job this past year and discuss how you dealt with it.

2. Discuss an issue or topic which you would like to investigate in your classroom or program.

PENNSYLVANIA ADULT LITERACY PRACTITIONER INQUIRY NETWORK SEMINAR REGION 8

Recommendations and Commitments

_____ is applying to participate in the 1995-96 Region 8 Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network Seminar. As a member of my staff, s/he has impressed me with his/her involvement in the following areas:

1. Classroom teaching/tutoring or program administration

2. Interaction with learners

3. Interaction with colleagues

4. Additional areas

I realize that PALPIN participants will share their experiences with teaching, tutoring and administering and what they are learning in the classroom with their colleagues. I also understand that this participation will include attending monthly seminar and small group meetings, using their own teaching situations or the program as a site of inquiry and possibly one-to-one cross-visitation. I understand that participants will receive a $350 stipend for participation in the Seminar. Knowing this, I offer my cooperation and support for the program and for any PALPIN participants who may visit my program.

Signature of Director: _____

Is this program Act 143 or Act 322 funded? _____no _____fully _____partially

Is this applicant's position Act 143 or Act 322 funded? ____no ____fully ____partially

As a PALPIN applicant, I realize that PALPIN participants will share their professional experiences and what they are learning in their classrooms and their programs with their colleagues. I also understand that this participation will include attending monthly seminar and small group meetings, using my own classroom or program as a site of inquiry and possibly one-to-one cross-visitation. I have obtained the commitment of the director(s) of all programs in which I am currently involved. Knowing this, I am applying to PALPIN in the expectation of being an active participant in its program.

Applicant's signature: _____

Pennsylvania Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education and
Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network (PALPIN)
announce an innovative staff development opportunity

LEARNING FROM PRACTICE:
A COLLABORATIVE EXPLORATION OF LEARNER-CENTERED EDUCATION
The PALPIN Winter Inquiry Institute
January 24 - 27, 1996

What's the purpose of the Winter Inquiry Institute?

- To provide a context for teachers, volunteers and administrators to pose questions and discuss critical issues of practice and to generate knowledge about ABE, GED, and ESL teaching and learning
- To offer an opportunity for collaborative professional and program development
- To promote leadership using an inquiry approach to professional development
- To provide adult literacy educators an opportunity to network with colleagues and to explore ways to build professional community locally and across the state

What will the Winter Inquiry Institute offer participants?

In small and large groups participants will:

- share current teaching and administrative dilemmas and successes
- read, write and talk about practice and research on a range of topics related to teaching and learning
- explore ways to investigate the questions and dilemmas that grow out of work in classrooms and programs
  -- these include observing, taking field notes, interviewing, collecting documents and analyzing data
- develop a strategy for investigating their questions in their own classrooms or programs

Institute participants will receive a **$350 STIPEND** upon completion of the Institute and a final project

Where and when will the Institute meet?

- The Institute will take place in facilities of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia from Wednesday, January 24 through lunch Saturday, January 27.
- Participants will stay at the Sheraton Hotel adjacent to the University of Pennsylvania campus.
- Participants need to be able to attend the entire Institute.

Travel expenses, room and board will be provided.

Who can apply?

- ABE, ESL and GED teachers, volunteers and administrators and other literacy staff from Act 143 or Section 322 funded programs are invited to apply. Multiple applications from the same program are welcomed. The Institute is limited to 10-15 participants.

To receive an application call Alisa Belzer, Project Director at 215-898-8865

APPLICATION DEADLINES:
Early Admissions: DECEMBER 22, 1995
Late Admissions: JANUARY 2, 1996

The PALPIN Winter Institute is a project of the Bureau of ABLE and the Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Project (ALPIP) and the Philadelphia Writing Project at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia

Practitioner Inquiry: Building Communities for Learning from Practice

Our work as teachers, tutors and administrators presents us with new challenges every day as we strive to meet the needs of learners. Although we draw on previous training and on life and professional experiences in our efforts to help learners meet their goals, most of us have important and pressing questions and concerns for which there are no concrete or simple answers. We are constantly confronted with questions such as: *How can I encourage students to take more active roles in their learning? What does it mean when a student stops coming? What do I do when my students' expectations about learning conflict with my own beliefs about teaching reading and writing? What is the relationship between talking and writing? What "counts" as progress? What's the relationship between literacy in a first and second language?* Workshops, conference presentations and trainings presented by experts in the field may provide new ideas, materials and strategies. But a different--and very important--context for professional learning is created when practitioners come together over time to explore their own interests and concerns. An innovative and exciting approach to improving practice, what is called *inquiry-based professional development* , provides opportunities for practitioners to form inquiry communities to collaborate in posing key questions and discussing critical issues from practice.

In inquiry-based professional development, groups of practitioners meet on a regular basis to read, write and talk about their practice and current research literature, some of it written by practitioner researchers. These activities prompt individual and group analyses and meaningful critique of classroom and program-based needs and issues. They also build a professional community as participants share successes, struggles and challenges. Growing out of these initial collaborative explorations, inquiry projects invite practitioners to investigate more deeply a question or problem that is particularly significant in their own day-to-day practice. When we research our own questions by looking closely at our classrooms and programs, we deepen our understanding of teaching and learning, of adult learners and literacy. When research "data" are the actual artifacts of practice--a teacher journal, samples of student writing, tapes of conversations with students or colleagues--and "analysis" is the process of richly describing and making sense of what we collect, we can begin to learn in a systematic way from our own practice. Inquiry groups like these create opportunities for teachers, tutors and administrators to learn in ways that are ongoing, learner-centered, and participatory.

Since 1991 when the National Center on Adult Literacy (NCAL) funded the Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Project (ALPIP), a growing network of practitioners in Philadelphia have come together in cross-program and program-based groups to investigate a wide range of important questions adult adult literacy education. Practitioners are using inquiry to raise new questions and to deepen their understanding on topics including the use of multi-cultural literature, alternative approaches to assessment, teacher roles in learner centered and participatory education, implications of learner diversity, and collaborative writing.

Through a Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education (ABLE) staff development initiative, teachers and administrators in the Philadelphia ALPIP Network have begun to extend the inquiry network across the state. Called the Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network, PALPIN is a 353 funded project designed to build the capacity of practitioners to learn from their own practice, enhance professional connections in the state, and make a close link between professional development and program improvement.

This year PALPIN is working intensively in Regions 6 and 8 to launch region-wide inquiry groups. It will also host a special, four-day Winter Inquiry Institute in Philadelphia (January 24-27, 1996) for practitioners in other regions of the state who would like an intensive opportunity to participate in an inquiry community, and get support for using inquiry to develop their own professional practice by working with colleagues in thei local settings. Watch for more information on the Winter Inquiry Institute in your regional newsletter and special mailings, or for more information contact Alisa Belzer, Project Director, PALPIN, University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Education, Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 898-8865; BELZERA@DOLPHIN.UPENN.EDU.

Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network
PALPIN

Region 6 Seminar

December 8, 1995
Adult Enrichment Center

Agenda

I	Introductions (name, program, position)	1:10
II	Getting acquainted	1:25

Reflective writing:

Think back over your week. Describe an experience, event or episode from your work that stands out for you--a high point, a low point, something that was especially interesting, something that is troubling to you or an "aha."

Sharing round:

Choose a brief passage from your writing (3-5 sentences) to read to the group.

Response/Discussion:

After listening for themes, common issues and interesting divergences, discuss, what we heard in the sharing round.

III	Background information on Region 6 Practitioner Inquiry Seminar Teacher research Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Project (ALPIP) PALPIN Overview of the year	2:00
BREAK		2:25
IV	Reflective conversation on the phrase "LEARNER -CENTERED" background on the activity written reflection response sharing summary and discussion	2:30
V	Research paradigms and teacher research	3:15
VI	Next Steps Organizing small groups Small group tasks Next full group meeting location	3:40
VI	Response sheets	3:55

Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network
PALPIN

Region 6 Seminar
January 19, 1996
Adult Enrichment Center

Agenda

I Re-Introductions (name, program, position) 1:10

II Announcements 1:20
- Upcoming conferences (IRA, COABE, Ethnography Forum)
- Document your questions
- Time line
- Other

III Group writing/sharing 1:30
- Write about a time when your beliefs about literacy conflicted with learners, co-workers, program policy, or etc.
- Share writing responses
- Response to writing

IV Small Group Experience 2:15
- Small Groups report on logistics and how they worked out
- What problems did small groups have? What worked well? How can we improve things for subsequent meetings?

What stands out about the content of the small group discussion?

V Doubting and Believing Game 3:00
- There are multiple literacies and there is no, one, definition of literacy.

VI Response Sheets 3:45

Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network (PALPIN)

Region 6 Seminar
February 9, 1996
Crispus Attucks

Agenda

I Re-Introductions--name, program position (last time, I promise) 1:10

II Announcements 1:20
- Ethnography Forum
- Documenting your questions
- Location for next meeting
- Co-facilitation for next meeting

III Inquiry Projects - What to expect, timeline 1:30

Develop and focus inquiry questions	2/9-Mid-March
Inquiry Methods (Data collection strategies)	3/8
Refine question and match with methods	Mid-March
Data collection	March-May
Analysis and writing	May-June

III Group writing/sharing 1:45

Write about an experience you had this week as a reader or as a teacher of reading that either particularly connects with something from the readings or particularly does not connect with something from the readings.

Share writing responses
Response to writing

IV Response to the readings on reading 2:15

In small groups of two or three (try to work with someone who is not in your regular small group), discuss what questions you have about teaching reading. Use your own experiences as a reader/teacher, your double entry journal response and your small group discussion as sources.

In whole group, share questions, choose a few to discuss.

V Developing inquiry questions 3:00
- Brainstorm questions (I wonder..., I'm curious about..., etc)
- Look at different kinds of questions
- Relationship between questions and research paradigms

VI Response Sheets 3:45

Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Project (PALPIN)

Region 6 Seminar Meeting
March 29, 1996
Central Pennsylvania Literacy Council
Harrisburg Area Community College

Agenda

I Announcements 1:10
- Final Project
- COABE
- Other (questions, comments, etc)

II Interviewing as data collection 1:15
- Introduction
- Interview read aloud
- Pairs work
  - What stands out for you about the "moves" the interviewer made?
  - What are some other questions you might ask?
- Report to large group

BREAK 1:55

III Field notes/Journals as data collection 2:05
- Introduction
- Skim field note/journal samples
- Pairs work
  - What stands out as important differences between these samples
  - What similarities are there
- Large groups discussion

IV Interview data for data sharing 2:45
- Introduction to activity
- Presenter: Alisa Belzer
- Facilitator:
- Focussing question: What implications does this material have for teachers working in adult literacy programs?

- Context of the work
- Round 1: Paraphrase
- Round 2: What stands out
- Round 3: Curiosity questions (I wonder...?)
- Round 4: What does this excerpt say to you as a practitioner?

- Discussion of the process

VI Wrap-Up 3:35
- Data Sharing sign-up
- Small group meetings
- Additional readings
- Response sheets

VI Wrap-up
- Data sharing sign-up
- Additional readings
- Response sheets

Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Project (PALPIN)

Region 6 Seminar Meeting
April 12, 1996
Catholic Diocesan Center

Agenda

I Announcements 1:10
- Hand-outs
- Other??

II Inquiry Projects 1:15
- Briefly describe your topic, question and data collection methods. Feel free to include struggles and questions.
- What stands out about the projects?

III Data Sharing Sessions 2:00

Session I
Presenter: Jaclyn Fowler Frey
Facilitator: Rebecca Reumann

Focusing question: How do adult learners experience their ESL classrooms?

Context for the research
Round 1 Paraphrase
Round 2 Curiosity questions (I wonder...?)
Round 3 General Impressions
Round 4 Open discussion

Session II
Presenter: Susan Miller
Facilitator: Alisa Belzer

Focusing question: What are some possible next steps for data collection in response to the questions raised in the second journal entry?

Context for the research
Round 1 Clarifying questions
Round 2 What stands out
Round 3 Curiosity questions (I wonder...?)
Round 4 Recommendations for next steps

BREAK 2:45

IV Group writing/sharing/reflecting on the readings 2:55

OVER

Pick something from the article you read on writing that stands out for you about teaching or learning writing. Write about how this issue/idea/concept does or doesn't connect with your experiences as a writer or teacher of writing.

In three small groups share written responses
Respond to the writing

V Group planning 3:35
Meeting locations for last two meetings
Last meeting "event"

VI Response sheets 3:50
Please indicate if you would like some additional consultation on your inquiry project from Alisa/Rebecca

Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Project (PALPIN)

Region 6 Seminar Meeting
May 10, 1996
Adult Enrichment Center

Agenda

I Announcements 1:10
- Final paper deadlines, paperwork
- City Family Magazine
- Last meeting
- Other??

II Data Analysis "mini-lesson" 1:20

III Data Sharing Sessions 1:50

Session I
Presenter: Jaclyn Fowler Frey
Facilitator: Alisa Belzer

Focusing question: How do adult learners experience their ESL classrooms?

Context for the research
Round 1 Paraphrase
Round 2 Curiosity questions (I wonder...?)
Round 3 General Impressions
Round 4 Open discussion

BREAK 2:35

Session II 2:45
Presenter: Sharon Egan
Facilitator: Alisa Belzer

Focusing question: What kinds of information would help improve this excerpt of my final project draft?

Context for the research
Round 1 What stands out
Round 2 Curiosity Questions (I wonder...?)
Round 3 Open ended discussion

IV Small Group Sharing on Project Work 3:20

In same small groups, share progress reports on your projects:
What is your question and how has it been evolving?
What data collection strategies are you using?
Where are you in the process now?
What is making you feel stuck, confused, concerned?

V Response sheets 3:55

OVER

Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network (PALPIN)

Region 6 Seminar Meeting
June 14, 1996
Crispus Attucks

Agenda

I	LUNCH	1:00
II	Fill out paper work for stipends	1:30
III	New Region 3	1:45
IV	Reflection on the year Small group discussion Samll group report out Individual completion of reponse sheet	1:55
V	Sharing of final projects Choose a paragraph from your final report to read aloud Response to texts	3:05
VI	Wrap-up	3:50

Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network
PALPIN

Region 8 Seminar

December 6, 1995
Cabrini College

Agenda

I Introductions (name, program, position) 12:55

II Getting acquainted - **ASSESSMENT** 1:05

Reflective writing:

Describe a recent experience, event, or episode from your practice that illustrates a question or concern or interest you have about assessment.

Sharing Round

Choose a brief passage (3-5 sentences) from your reflection to read to the group.

Response/Discussion

After listening for themes, common issues and interesting divergences, discuss what we heard in the sharing round.

III Background information on Region 8 Practitioner Inquiry Seminar 1:40
- Teacher research
- Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Project (ALPIP)
- PALPIN
- Overview of the year

BREAK 2:05

IV Reflective conversation on the word "PROGRESS" 2:15
- background on the activity
- written reflection
- response sharing
- summary

V Research Paradigms and Teacher Research 3:00

VI Next Steps 3:20
- matching mentors and mentees (geography, topic)
- future meeting times/places/dates

VII Response Sheets 3:40

Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Project (PALPIN)

Region 8 Seminar Meeting
February 28, 1996
Grace Hall, Cabrini College

Agenda

I Re-Introductions (Name, program, position, mentor/mentee) 12:55

II Announcements 1:10

- Time line
- Ethnography Forum
- COABE
- Region 8?

III Reflective writing on Retention 1:20

Write about a recent experience, issue or concern you've had relating to retention in your class or program. If possible make connections with the readings for today.

Choose a brief passage (3-5 sentences) from your reflection to read to the group.

Response/Discussion--Listen for common themes and issues as well as interesting divergences in what we heard during the sharing round.

IV Developing an inquiry focus/question 1:55

- Refresher on what's inquiry and overview of inquiry questions (BREAK)
- Small group work towards finding a focus
- Large group small group reports

V Inquiry data collection methods 2:55

- Overview of methods
- Relationship between questions and methods
- Past experiences with inquiry (Mentors)

VI Wrap Up 3:25

- Inquiry tasks
- Expectations for next meeting
- Meeting date, time, place

VII Response Sheets 3:40

Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Project (PALPIN)

Region 8 Seminar Meeting
March 27, 1996
Grace Hall, Cabrini College

Agenda

I Re-Introductions 12:55

II Announcements 1:05
- Questions not answers
- Final Project
- Meeting times/days
- Readings for this time
- COABE
- Region 8?

III Small Group Sharing on Project Work 1:15

In same small groups as last time, give progress reports on your projects:
- How has your question evolved since our last meeting?
- What data collection strategies do you think you might use?
- Where are you in the process now?
- What is making you feel stuck, confused, concerned?

BREAK 1:55

IV Interviewing as data collection 2:05
- Introduction
- Interview read aloud
- Pairs wor'
  - What stands out for you about the "moves" the interviewer made?
  - What are some other questions you might ask?
- Report to large group

V Interview data for data sharing 2:50
- Introduction to activity
- Presenter: Alisa Belzer
- Facilitator: Rebecca Reumann

Focussing question: What implications does this material have for teachers working in adult literacy programs?

- Context of the work
- Round 1: Paraphrase
- Round 2: What stands out
- Round 3: Curiosity questions (I wonder...?)
- Round 4: What does this excerpt say to you as a practitioner?

VI Wrap-up 3:35
- Data sharing sign-up
- Additional readings
- Response sheets

Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network (PALPIN)

Region 8 Seminar Meeting
April 24, 1996
Grace Hall, Cabrini College

Agenda

I Announcements 12:55
- Final Project
- Taylor and Bogdan article
- City Family
- Region 8
- Other

II Small Group Sharing on Project Work 1:05

In same small groups as last time, give progress reports on your projects:
- How has your question evolved since our last meeting?
- What data collection strategies are you using
- Where are you in the process now?
- How's it going

III Data Sharing Session (Large Group) 1:40
Presenter: Pat Stewart
Facilitator: Alisa Belzer

Focussing question: What can be understood about peer tutoring from this data?

Context of the work
Round 1: Text rendering
Round 2: What stands out?
Round 3: Recommendations for practice

BREAK 2:20

IV Data Sharing Sessions (Small Group) 2:30
Session I
Presenter Linda Wolfson
Facilitator: Alisa Belzer

Focussing question: What other kinds of questions can I ask to elicit feedback about evaluations?

Context of the work
Round 1: Clarifying questions
Round 2: What stands out?
Round 3: Curiosity questions (I wonder...)

Session II
Presenter Elizabeth Mitchell
Facilitators: Rebecca Reumann and Cameron Voss

Focussing question: What's missing in this data and what are my next steps?

Context of the work
Round 1: What stands out?
Round 2: Next steps
Round 3: Open-ended discussion

V Discussion of the readings 3:05
What stood out about these readings for you?

VI Wrap-up 3:35
Final meeting
Additional interest in data sharing
Final meeting??
Response sheets

Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network (PALPIN)

Region 8 Seminar Meeting
May 29, 1996
Cabrini College

Agenda

I Announcements 12:55
- Final Project
- Pot Luck Lunch
- PALPIN Future

II Small Group Sharing on Project Work 1:05

In same small groups as last time, give progress reports on your projects:
- How has your question evolved since our last meeting?
- What data collection strategies are you using?
- Where are you in the process now?
- How's it going?

III Data Sharing Session I 1:40
Presenter: Kelly Limeul
Facilitator: Jean Fleschute and Alisa Belzer

Focussing question: What descriptive information is available in the data provided in this session?

Context of the work
Round 1: What stands out?
Round 2: Curiosity questions (I wonder...)
Round 3: Recommendations for how to structure/use the data in the final report

BREAK 2:20

IV Data Sharing Session II 2:30
Presenter: Nancy Moyer
Facilitator: Alisa Belzer

Focussing question: What kinds of criteria for evaluating various student assessment tools could be used? i.e. il what ways could I decide a particular tool meets the needs of all "stakeholders"?

Context of the work
Round 1: Clarifying questions
Round 2: Recommended criteria for evaluation
Round 3: Next steps (recommendations) for change process in assessment procedures

V Mini lesson on Data Analysis (based on Taylor and Bogdan article) 3:10

VI Wrap-up 3:40
Response sheets

Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network (PALPIN)

Region 8 Seminar Meeting
June 12, 1996
Cabrini College

Agenda

I	LUNCH	12:00
II	Fill out paper work for stipends	12:45
III	Reflection on the year Small group discussion Samll group report out Individual completion of reponse sheet	1:05
IV	Sharing of final projects Choose a paragraph from your final report to read aloud Response to texts	2:30

Pennsylvania Adult Literacy
Practitioner Inquiry Network
(PALPIN)

Winter Inquiry Institute

January 24-27, 1996
Philadelphia, PA

Alisa Belzer, University of Pennsylvania
Peggy McGuire, Germantown Women's Educational Project
Rebecca Reumann, Community Learning Center
Carolyn Talarr, University of Pennsylvania

Institute Facilitators/Planners

The Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network is a project of the Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Project and the Philadelphia Writing Project at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Funded by a grant from the PA Department of Education Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education and the UPS Foundation

Winter Inquiry Institute

January 24, 1996
Day 1
Bennett Hall, Room 220

Exploring issues in learner-centered education

Plan

Introductions 9:15
- Name, place, job
- Favorite reading you've used with learners

Getting Acquainted 9:45
- Human Scavenger Hunt

Orientation 10:00
- Overview of the schedule and materials in your folder
- Background on practitioner inquiry
- Data presentation sign-up
- Where we're going-- Projects

BREAK 10:45

Reflection on a word/phrase -- LEARNER-CENTERED
- 11:00
- Introduction to the activity
- Writing
- Sharing
- What stands out

Discussion of Brookfield article from packet of readings
- 11:45
- What stands out?

LUNCH 12:30

Introduction to journal groups 1:15

Journal Group Meeting
- 1:30
- Writing
- Sharing/Discussion

Focusing Topic:

Write about a challenge you have faced in your program or classroom that raises questions for you about learner-centered education.

Interviewing as data collection 2:30

- Mini-lesson on interviewing
- Interviewing activity
  - Brainstorm interview questions aimed at understanding beliefs and practices regarding reading and writing
  - Organize questions
  - Paired interviews
  - Debrief

Panel Presentation 4:00

Local practitioners will discuss the process and findings of inquiry projects they have done

Lynette Hazelton, Community Women's Education Project
Peggy McGuire, Germantown Women's Educational Project

Reaction Sheets
5:00

Data sharing planning conferences 5:00

Winter Inquiry Institute

January 25, 1996
Day 2
Greenfield Intercultural Center
3708 Chestnut Street, Patio Room

Exploring issues in reading & writing

Plan

Housekeeping	9:00
Exploring Assumptions about reading & writing I Doubting and Believing Game	9:30
BREAK	10:45
Exploring assumptions about reading & writing II In small groups read PDE Handbook article	11:00

Based on your experience, what about this article rings true?
What rings false?
What's missing?

Small groups report out

LUNCH	12:15
Journal Group	1:00

Focusing Topic:

Write about an example from your practice (a description) which illustrates your response to a doubting/believing statement or one of the questions from the previous activity.

Contrasting research paradigms Quantitative, process-product research Qualitative, descriptive research Teacher research/practitioner inquiry	2:00
BREAK	2:30
Data sharing session Presenter: Jesse Brundage Chair: Alisa Belzer	2:45

Partial data sharing sessions Presenters to be announced	3:30
Reaction Sheets	4:45
Project planning conferences	4:45
Put Luck Dinner Greenfield Intercultural Center, Lobby Room	6:30

Winter Inquiry Institute

January 26, 1996
Day 3
Graduate School of Education, Room C-11
3700 Walnut Street

Exploring issues in authentic assessment

Plan

Planning for home 9:00

Look over your journal writing, think about the data you brought from home and the interest you expressed on your application as a way to reflect on what's standing out, nudging, indicating gaps that you might want to learn more about, focus on, investigate, inquiry into. Write about what's on your mind.

Dimensions of literacy development 9:30

Whole group Brainstorm:
What would it be helpful to know about a learner to help plan instruction?

Small group activity:
Group the list into like "piles". Develop names for each pile.

Share category names

BREAK 10:45

Descriptive Review of a learner
11:00
Presenters: Marie Knibbe
Chair: Rebecca Reumann
Focusing question: How can I help Irma continue to make progress toward her goals at this time when she appears to have reached a plateau in her learning?

LUNCH 12:15

Journal Group 1:00

Focusing Topic:

Choose an assessment dimension from the activity this morning. Write about some possibilities for learning more from and with learners about that dimensions. What would be the supports and obstacles to implementation?

Mini-lesson on observation/field notes/teaching journal	2:00
Partial data sharing Presenters to be announced	2:45
Sustaining the community over time In small groups discuss the following questions: What are our goals/purposes for sustaining this community? What will make it difficulty to reach these goals? What strategies can we use to help us? Debrief	4:00
Reaction Sheets	5:00
Project planning conferences	5:00

Winter Inquiry Institute

January 27, 1996
Day 4
Moore Building, Room 225
33rd & Walnut Streets (SW Corner, entrance on 33rd Street)

Planning for home

Plan

Planning for home 9:00

Individual writing time (5 - 10 minutes). Brainstorm a specific area in which you would like feedback from others (e.g. focus/topic, data collection method, overcoming obstacles)

Small group meeting--to give and receive feedback on a specific area of the work to be done at home.

Individual writing time--Sketch out an "action plan" for your inquiry work at home. Include what your area/topic/focus is, which data collection method you will use, and how you will get support for this work.

Group Discussion 11:30

What are the benefits of doing this work?
What are the obstacles?
What can we do to overcome the obstacles?

Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network
Region 8 Seminar

RESPONSE SHEET

NAME_____ DATE_____

1. What stands out from today's seminar session?

2. What questions or issues would you like to discuss further?

3. Additional comments?

Pennsylvania Adult Literacy Practitioner Inquiry Network (PALPIN)

Final Response Sheet

What are the most important things for you about participating in PALPIN this year? (I.e. what stands out about the year, what was best about it, etc)

Please comment briefly on PALPIN program aspects listed below (i.e., how useful were they, how might you have done them differently, should we repeat this process next year, etc).

Meetings (activities, formats, frequency, etc.)--reflective writing and discussion on topics from the readings, small group work, data sharing, etc.

Memos

Inquiry tasks

Inquiry Projects (developing question, doing data collection, data analysis, report)

Mentoring relationship

Readings

Other

In what ways, if any, has your participation in PALPIN influenced or changed your practice or the way you think about your work?

What would you do differently regarding your own participation or in terms of the overall structure of PALPIN, if you had it to do over again?

Other suggestions or comments (criticism and praise are equally welcome)

PALPIN Winter Inquiry Institute News

April 1996

FTD: Findings to Date

My own inquiry project has been moving along slowly. Just like the rest of you, I find it hard to force myself to work on it. So far, I have sent out two rounds of surveys designed to track the group's processes and progress in implementing inquiry projects. I think I still might get a few more response back from round two, but here's where things stand now.

Round 1, number of responses: 10 (out of 15)
Round 2, number of responses: 9

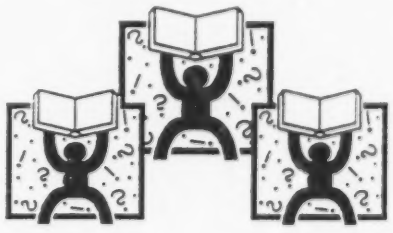
I will do at least one more round and would really appreciate hearing from all of you, but especially those of you who have been silent so far. Sorry I forgot to enclose a return envelop this last time. If you're still wondering where to send your survey, you can mail it to me at home: 4953 McKean Avenue, Philadelphia PA 19144

Here are a few things that are jumping out at me from the responses.

• Although some were able to, not everyone went right home and jumped into doing their inquiry projects. Some people continued to wrestle with their questions. Others felt frustrated by structural issues (read: upheaval, sudden change, inertia, etc) within their programs that made implementation of data collection difficult (these problems are part of what you can document). Of course, TIME was a factor for several people too. I think over all, the finding here is that everyone has to move at their own pace and sometimes the work has to be done in fits and starts (reflecting the reality of work life in this field...) depending on what else is going on.

• In addition to how smoothly or not people's specific projects are going, a few people wrote that they feel they are taking a look at their work in a new way--with an inquiry mind set. I assume this means something like more questioning, reflective, involving of learners or colleagues in understanding what's going on and providing feedback and taking one's own assumptions less for granted. Is this what that means to you? What does it mean to become more inquiry oriented?? For me the finding here has to do with the importance of inquiry as staff development, not just inquiry projects as staff development. I guess I'm saying that the projects are a process to support and encourage a way of thinking about our work.

• It's possible that the people having the most trouble are the one's least likely to respond to the survey, or maybe simply they are not really engaged in the process at this point. With that aside, some people did write about struggles and questions beyond just getting the work done or wondering if they were heading in the right direction. For example, a couple people asked if anyone had any suggestions on how to squeeze journal writing into very tight schedules. Any suggestions??



One of my favorites is to have students do journal writing and write in my own journal at the same time. Other suggestions? Another person wondered if she would collect enough data. This is hard to answer in the abstract, but if you are documenting something about your practice in some way on a regular basis (this doesn't have to be very often, just regular and ongoing) and/or if you are implementing a couple specific approaches to learning more (e.g. x number of interviews), you are probably doing fine.

• In general people are doing very little using of our little professional network to get help on projects or with practice more generally. Some people have had no contact with others. Some people have had contact with only me or Rebecca. Some people have contacted one other person from the group (this is excluding people who work together). A couple of people have contacted one of our presenters. People have used e-mail, the telephone and I think regular mail and fax. Remember you will get stipends if you finish your projects, so don't be afraid to use the phone. That's one thing the money is for!! I guess the finding here is that without specific impetus for doing so, it is relatively rare to utilize the community once everyone has gone home.

Data Sharing

You will find a mail-in data sharing and a mail-in reflection enclosed in this newsletter. Please return your responses by April 24th. This is critical to the success of the activity. I will share responses and my "analysis" of them in the next newsletter. If you would like response to something from your work, please let me know. We can discuss what kind of feedback you want from the group and plan it for the next newsletter. Don't forget you can share a piece of anything from your project....

❄ ❄ ❄ ❄ ❄ ❄ ❄

COABE Update

There are several pieces of news and reminders related to COABE. First of all, I hope you're planning to attend. If you haven't already done so, contact your regional coordinator. You may be able to get a voucher to cover registration costs and also get reimbursed for some of your travel expenses.

• Don't forget, there will be a pre-conference session on practitioner inquiry and action research on May 15th. This is designed to be a working session for people who are involved in this kind of work here in Pennsylvania and also in other states. We hope this will be a good opportunity to network, share experiences, discuss similarities and differences in the ways we have done our work, and do some collaborative problem solving. I think it will be a really good day. If you need more information on registering for it, let me know.

• If you need a good cheap place to stay, I understand that there are dorm rooms available at Duquesne University which is very close to the conference site. Singles are $22 and doubles are $19 (plus 7% tax). For more information call Susan Grove, (412) 531-8715.

• Although I assumed that our session proposal which was to feature practitioner inquiry and action research projects of participants in PA staff development initiatives this year would be accepted, it was not. So if you were thinking you might like to present your project at COABE, unfortunately there won't be an opportunity. Strangely, no proposals that we know of relating to practitioner inquiry or action research were accepted. It is possible that the people who made the decisions thought that with the pre-conference, the topic had been amply covered. It's really a shame because the pre-conference serves a very different purpose than the sessions we proposed. Oh well. Hopefully, next year there will be other opportunities to present. By then, more of you might be in a position to do so. I will keep my eye open for opportunities and let you know. Be thinking mid-winter conference!!

Looking ahead: PALPIN in 96-97

I thought you might be interested to know what the plans are for PALPIN in the future. Currently we are awaiting word as to whether PALPIN has been refunded by PDE. We are hoping (and pretty much assuming) that it will be.

In many ways, we will follow a similar format as this year, but because the regions are changing (there will be six much larger regions instead of nine), things will look different. Two regions will again be involved--hopefully one that includes some of you and many of the participants in the current regional groups and one that may include some of you but will be a new area of the state for PALPIN. In at least one region, we hope to establish an on-line inquiry group. We will also offer another Winter Inquiry Institute. In addition, we will plan a number of events for the Mid-Winter conference (presentations, informational sessions, working group, etc). ALL of these activities will provide opportunities for involvement and leadership from you, experienced PALPINers. We are hoping that many of you will want to stay involved. I'll let you know more as we go.

We also proposed to develop some kind of publication that would serve as a framework for inquiry groups to use and/or for PALPINers who take on leadership roles but need something to read...There is already a publication in the works in Philadelphia based on the local work done here over the last five years, but PALPIN will either do an addendum or some variation on it for use in Pennsylvania. Hopefully, we will form a working group of local Philadelphia ALPIPers and PALPIN participants to work on this next spring!

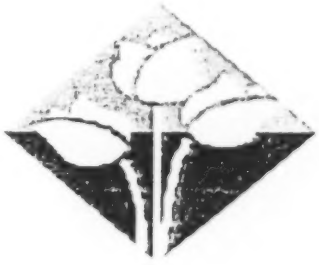
I'm really excited about the possibilities for next year and beyond now that there is some interest and expertise spreading out around the state. We can do so much more with all of you than with just me and a few people here in Philadelphia.

And Finally...

So what should be in the next newsletter?? I'm assuming I can get another newsletter out in mid or late May. I'm planning to include more findings from my inquiry and the "results" of the mail-in stuff. I'm hoping a few more people will share data or other aspects of their inquiry work. What else should be in there? Please let me know if you have ideas or suggestions.

I will send you an article on analyzing data with the next survey round.
Final projects will be due in mid-June. Maybe now is a good time to do a time line to plan out how you can accomplish this.

Have you been reimbursed for your expenses at the Winter Institute yet? Let me know if you haven't.



Note: Carrie McClure now has e-mail. Her address is corpp@libertynet.org

First-Ever Mail-In
Data Sharing Session!!!

This data is presented by Carrie McClure. Alisa Belzer will be the "facilitator" (this means I will receive and analyze responses and send them back out again to everyone). Please respond in writing to the prompt for each round. Carrie wrote the following brief introduction to the data.

J.B. is seventeen years old and has been in my class for approximately one month.

J.B. wrote this piece titled "Raheem" as a character study. In class we had discussed how to develop a character by telling about the character's life, his/her appearance, and actions. The class had read a short piece of writing about a character and then created a character as a group. J.B. then created "Raheem" in response to an assignment that asked him to write 50 wrods or MORE about a fictional character.

Focussing question: How can I support J.B's development as a writer?

Round 1 What stands out about this piece of writing?

Round 2 What stands out about J.B. as a writer?

Round 3 What curiosities do I have about Gary as a writing (or about this piece of writing)? (Curiosity questions can start with I wonder...)

Round 4 What recommendations can be made to help J.B. grow as a writer? (please use the back of this page)

J.B.

RAHeem

[redacted]

Raheem is a poor young black teenager. He was born in New York, Thalem. but he later move to Philly because of the loss of his Mother. he sent nine years in Jail as a child he grew up with very low income and two little brothers, and one sister. the mom had one job cutting earned $6.25 and hr she took care of the kids the best way she could Raheen didn't really get what wented because of the others. Raheem dro out of school in the 8th node. He was cau up with the wrong Crowd that smoke pot and drink beer. He ran away several times but had no money. He was tall and the ladys dream. pritty brown eyes and pritty brown skin. He was a smart child but very poor, and Helpful One day he came home and seen the Co and ambulance in front of his house he rush to his house and while he was coming there was bringing his mom out in a bodys bag with her face showing. He broke down in tears and sent ran off.

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First-Ever Mail-In
Reflection on a word!!!

Remember back to the very first day of the Winter Inquiry Institute when we did a "reflection" on the phrase learner-centered?? Well, we're going to try that here using the word COMMUNITY.

Marcy Seminoff is doing her inquiry on the development of community at various levels in her program--among staff, learners and across staff and learners. This is particularly relevant to her as her program is evolving into a community family center. I suggested that it might be helpful to her to open the possibilities of what community could mean. To that end, we're going to try this reflection

Directions: Take about five minutes to reflect on the word community in the space below. Remember the goal is not so much to coin a definition, but rather write about "the contexts in which the word might appear, the images it evokes for you, and the experiences you've had with it, as well as other words, images or ideas that come to mind as you reflect on the word." Let your mind freely associate. Thoughts can be written as they come in single words, phrases or sentences.

First-Ever Mail-In
Data Sharing Session!!!

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Round 4 What recommendations can be made to help J.B. grow as a writer? (please use the back of this page)

PALPIN Winter Inquiry Institute News

May 1996

FYI: Findings to Date

After one more round of surveying Institute participants here's what I learned from your responses.

Number of responses: 8

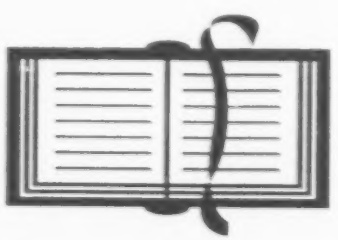
• Note that the number of responses has dropped with each of the three surveys. To me this could be indicating a gradual loss of connection to the work and the community as memories of the Institute slip to the back burner. This bit of data made me feel that next year I have to work harder to maintain the connection and keep this work present in people's work lives in spite of everyone's busy-ness. Somewhat surprising to me, however, when Rebecca made some follow-up calls to a few people from whom we've heard nothing since January, most had been doing their projects and were getting ready or in the process of writing up their reports. Maybe this also indicates that there needs to be more than one way to stay in touch.

• Everyone seems to be rolling into the finish. Although some respondents are finishing up data collection, most everyone has started to work on writing. Some of the comments about the writing process were particularly encouraging. Although one person said she is feeling nervous about writing, others reported that it had been easier to get started than expected and that the process was helping to organize thoughts, see things previously hidden and was helping new patterns, ideas and questions to emerge.

• A couple of people commented overall on having done the inquiry work. One person said that she is seeing her work in a whole new ways as a result of "taking an inquiry stance" (our researcher term for what this kind of professional development encourages). Another respondent reported that her inquiry has helped her feel better about her program.

• One person raised a fear about the validity of her inquiry work because her data collection had been relatively small scale. I sense that others may be wondering about this as well, so I wanted to comment. Remember your data collection strategy is designed to help you learn new things about your work, look deeper at what's going on, move on to other questions, see things in a new way. It does not have to be "proof" of anything. Think back to those research paradigms we talked about in January. While the quantitative research paradigm assumes that you can generalize if you adequately sample and control variables, the qualitative paradigm assumes that there is no one truth anyway and that data collection is not generalizable but rather suggestive.

• There were several indicators that there has been minimal contact within our inquiry community over the months since the Institute. It seems that I have been the main contact point and that little has gone on from participant to participant. The exception has been those from Bradford County (Kathy, Leslie and Larry) where three people from the same program participated in the institute and



these three have continued to communicate about their inquiry work. One person complained that she tried to get feedback from others, but got very little or found that it was no longer timely when she did get it. To me, this is a loss after seeing our group come together as well as it did in just four days. I am already thinking about strategies for the next Institute for keeping people in better touch once they leave (e.g. small tasks and milestones along the way to be completed by certain dates and exchanged with assigned partners/buddies).

Data Sharing

Results of the First-ever mail in data sharing and reflection on on a word sessions are in!

Response to these activities was a bit sparse and I prodded those of you whom I could via e-mail to reply. I think responding to such a task is one of those things that one means to do for weeks and then it seems too late. Knowing this, I held off on this newsletter for a while hoping more responses would trickle in. In all, eight responses to the data sharing of Carrie's data came in and six people reflected on the word community. Although it's late, I hope these summaries will be helpful to Marcy and Carrie and interesting to the rest of you. I have included the original piece of writing from Carrie's student for your reference.

Data sharing session
Round 1--What stands out about this piece of writing
Round 2--What stands out about J.B. as a writer?

I have collapsed these two rounds because response overlapped quite a bit. The responses seemed to fall into five categories, each described below.

• Emotional response evoked for the reader by the writer/piece of writing: A number of people commented on how the piece made them feel or what kind of emotional content the piece had. These included deprivation, pain, starkness, depressing, nothing but hard times. All of these descriptors seem sad and/or negative. One other person noted that the emotional content seemed intimate and expressed thoughts not usually made public.

• Mechanics: Comments related to mechanics focussed both on what J.B. did quite well and what seemed to be weaknesses. For example, strengths included organization, few misspellings, he followed directions in developing a character, his basic sentence structure is correct. His areas that seemed to need improvement included run-on sentences, and that he often dropped -ed from past tense verbs.

• Style: By far the most comments related to J.B.'s style as a writer. In particular, the writing was described as having good visual descriptions with lots of detail. His language was described as simple, direct and powerful (from the heart) and as utilizing lots of adjectives. It flows. One person observed that he set the stage/setting and then led up to the trauma of seeing his mother dead. Others noted that the character seems real and that descriptions are insightful and blunt descriptions of life.

• Writing strategy: One person surmised that he probably doesn't do much prewriting (e.g. mapping) or editing.

• Interpretive/Content comments: A few people responded in an interpretive manner. For example, one person noted that J.B.'s love for his mother comes across as does his confusion about his allegiance to home.

Round 3--Curiosity questions

The curiosity questions focussed on three areas: questions about J.B. as a person (how old is he, what's his cultural background, are there opportunities for healing), questions about J.B. as a writer

(how does he feel about writing, was this piece hard for him to write, what is his writing process like, whether the enthusiasm for writing reflected in this piece mirrors his feelings about writing more generally, and whether some of the ideas in this piece could be developed further), and the origins of this story (many wanted to know if this was autobiographical, based on someone's life J.B. knows and/or where he got his ideas from, what life experiences helped create this story).

Round 4--Recommendations for helping J.B. grow as a writer

Ways to help J.B. as a writer focused on both mechanics and more writerly aspects of the craft. First and foremost, however, a few suggestions were made to emphasize how well he had done on this piece--that it is so clearly from the heart.

• Mechanics: Suggestions included mini-lesson on past tense of verbs, if there is access have him type story onto PC and use spell check to both give him introduction to computers and help with spelling in a non-frustrating context, read aloud one sentence at a time to help with run-ons, work on paragraphing, punctuation, capitals, spelling.

• Writerly skills: The suggestions here seemed to focus on helping J.B. expand on what he is already doing well. There was a lot of agreement that he should simply write more. More specifically, it was suggested that he should write about what he knows including what happens next to Raheem. Several noted that rewriting and revising could help him sharpen what he is trying to express considerably (e.g. work on chronology). One person felt that if this piece had come easily to him, he should try writing in other genres, but if it had been a struggle, he should stay with topics and activities that are comfortable for a while.

• Personal development: A couple of people saw J.B.'s reading and writing as opportunities for him to work on his personal development. For example, one suggestion was that he read other writers to help him resolve or at least process some of his pain. Another suggested that writing could help him channel his anger in positive ways.

Reflection on a word--COMMUNITY

I guess given Marcy's difficulty grappling with the word community, it's not surprising that it seemed hard to summarize this reflection, but here goes.

Two metaphors came across very clearly. One was of materials that are intertwined and connected--close knit, threads of a rope and web were words used that fit this kind of response. The second metaphor was structural/architectural, e.g. town, buildings, schools, churches, home, classroom, a place together.

Much of the language about community was very positive and sounded quite comforting--like nice worn in shoes, a favorite dessert, a warm bath or something like that. Words that fell here included support, helpful, sharing, deep enduring bonds, pleasant, safety, peaceful, restful. However, there were also a smattering of oppositional kinds of words--comfort and conflict, good and bad, can cause conflicting priorities.

Many terms were used to convey commonality within community--shared ideas, values, common goal, cause. However, diversity was also mentioned as was the concept that physical proximity is not a requirement (e.g. the internet) The concept that communities can be stronger and more effective than individuals came across as well--getting things done, more power in a group than with an individual.

Also, words were used to represent community as being caring or even care-taking--each gives to meet needs of all, committed to the good of the whole, taking care of.

There was talk of community as a kind of bonding and what makes the bond--talk/conversations, remembering names, knowing each other in different context, communal activities.

Finally, there was something in the responses that reflected an absence of aloneness and alienation--we, I within we, knowing everyone, I'll be valued and respected.

Inquiry Projects Due!!

Don't forget your final deadline for getting your inquiry project in is June 14th, 1996. As you know, time is needed to process your paper work for your stipend so we must hold firm to this deadline. If you have any questions, concerns or problems with completing your project, please don't hesitate to call Alisa.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Sherry Harris. She has the distinction of being the first to complete her inquiry project. Good work and let her be an inspiration to you all!

Looking ahead: PALPIN in 96-97

Although we have not yet received official notification, every signal points to the fact that PALPIN will be funded again in 1996-97. As reported in the last newsletter issue, plans include, again, ongoing inquiry group work in two inquiry and a winter institute. The twist is that there are now practitioners out there (that's you) who can take on leadership in all of these endeavors. Once we have determined the regions in which PALPIN will work next year, we'll be contacting those of you involved to see if you are interested in taking advantage of leadership opportunities. These might include planning and shaping the year's activities, mentoring, facilitating meetings and/or data sharing sessions. Likewise, those of you not in a region targeted for the ongoing seminars will have opportunities to help out with the winter institute. Also we will be trying to produce some kind of documentation on implementing practitioner inquiry and this too will be an opportunity to get involved in leadership (this will not be until spring '97). Hopefully, many of you will be involved in the coming year. It will be exciting to begin to draw on leaders around the state to build and strengthen the inquiry network in Pennsylvania!

Announcements

Important Arrivals...

In the new arrivals department, we are eagerly awaiting the arrival of Rebecca Reumann's new baby. Due date is May 21. Marie Knibbe (she shared her descriptive review of a learner with us at the Winter Institute) gave birth to a girl on Friday May 17th. Joan Weng, our administrative assistant in the office (many of you requested an application from her) is expecting in July. And for those of you who don't know already, let me be the first to tell you that I too am pregnant (something in the water??). My husband Jon and I are having a boy (name not yet determined) expected to arrive on September 9th.

New e-mail address

Kathy Gleockner now has e-mail. Her address is kgleockner@cyber-quest.com. She's ready and waiting for e-mail!

Just a reminder

Alisa Belzer's phone number is (215)849-6224

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1996 PALPIN Inquiry questions, topics, or titles

Discovery learning: what does it look like in a classroom context? How can I know when it's happening? What does a discovery moment feel like to my ABE/GED students?

Can I find a balance between my philosophies and expectations and those of my students?/What will happen to my GED classes when I add enrichment activities and move away from the GED books?

What subject and teaching techniques motivate adult-education students best?

What is the nature of community in the workplace?

What happens when a process for adult learners to set and assess their goals monthly is established?

How do I individualize lessons for the many different academic levels I have in a typical class while at the same time creating a situation conducive to group lessons and interaction?--especially in regard to reading.

Is it feasible to incorporate a separate reading group within an ABE classroom?

How is ESL staff development delivery structured in states like California and Texas? What do the stakeholders in these two states think about professional development opportunities? What do these two states have to teach a state like PA?

How does a supervisor empower and motivate per diem adult educators in the execution of a federally-funded sub-contracted literacy program?

What happens when I tutor...or am tutored within the classroom?

How do the various stakeholders view a workplace education program?

A look at what five low-reading-level fiction series mean to new readers?

What happens when we try a new assessment and placement test?

Incorporating visual skills assessment and training into a one-on-on literacy program

What would happen if I took the initiative to recruit students back to class with a little personal touch?

What are some of the characteristics of students we retain in our program?

What would happen if students were required to write daily and weekly short term goals pertaining to their classroom activities?

How do language and culture interact in the learning context from learners' points of view?

The impact of online technology as a primary communication vehicle of Adult literacy practitioner research projects

How do adult English as a second language learners studying in a language rich, immersion setting perceive the role of feedback in their own learning?

An examination of teaching reading in a beginning level ESL classroom

Why do students feel anger at bitterness at being placed in my class (an ABE class) instead of a GED class?

Teaching writing: shifting paradigms

What is learner-centered education? What does it mean to students? What does it mean to staff? Is it essential in Adult education, as defined?

What happens when I give the students books to work in and keep?

What happens in an individual's life when their English skills improve?

Literacy in the workplace: Communication Needs of the ESL employee in job performance

Change in social interactions for adults in learning English as a second language

Evaluating the reading and writing practices of...literacy...students.

What type of impact does an all-day session have on social support...financial support...goal attainment, and instructor involvement?

How do I, as a teacher, feel about having a learner-centered classroom? What were my initial thoughts on this type of classroom and how have my opinions and beliefs changed as a result of my experiences with a learner-centered classroom? What tensions or resistance did I encounter from students? from administration?

How do tutors at VITA use the evaluations they receive at the time they are matched with their students?

Who are we serving at [my program] and in what ways? What happens when I try to understand the range of ways IVOC serves clients?

What happens when I integrate several new assessment procedures into the intake process of my practice?